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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0585
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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: ROME BILATERAL MEETING TRUMPETED IN PRO-REGIME KHARTOUM
DAILY

11. (SBU) Khartoum pro-regime daily Akhbar al Youm headlined April 17 on page one the Sudan-US talks in Rome, prominently announcing "details of the talks on Sudanese-US relations on their first day." The article states that "today the two sides will conclude important talks for developing bilateral relations." Sudanese Ambassador in Rome Rabie Hassan Ahmed is quoted saying that the two sides have "tabled their proposals in regard to pending issues." The Ambassador underlines the importance of the talks to tackle "all joint and pending issues" and "to enhance and develop bilateral relations." Photographs of FM Alor and party chief Nafie accompanying the article graphically demonstrated the high level of Sudanese participation in the talks.

12. (SBU) Comment: Although the article is in fact very thin on details (especially in comparison to the NY Times article datelined in Washington of the same day based on the leaked non-paper "received from an American official critical of the administration's position") the overall tone of the article is overwhelmingly optimistic and sets high expectations for a breakthrough in Sudan-US relations. This will likely frame the way that any result (positive or negative) from Rome is received. If there is no breakthrough or at least some tangible progress in Rome, we expect disappointment not just from the Government but also from many quarters of Sudanese society. This will of course frame our relationships going forward, with the GOS more intransigent than ever on the things are important to us in Darfur and on the CPA (not to mention the NEC), and some of the Sudanese population (especially in Khartoum) frustrated by a perceived rigidity in US policy toward Sudan while others in the country with their own special agenda will breathe a sigh of relief at a lack of progress.

FERNANDEZ